

RAM (R13) pattern could have been used by mailing service

Ever wonder why perfins catalog editors have gray hair—or no hair at all? Consider the RAM pattern (R13)!

In the July/August *Bulletin*, Vince McDermott asked if anyone knew anything about an organization called Schwaben Verein of Chicago. Vince couldn't be certain of the perfin used on his cover. But Paul Gault (September *Bulletin*) offered a similar cover with a complete R13 perfin on it. That sent the editor to his own collection where he turned up two users for the RAM pattern: Rapid Addressing Machine Company of Chicago and J. Capps & Sons Woolen Mills of Jacksonville, IL.

Now comes Bob Schwerdt with a cover bearing the RAM pattern and a 1913 Chicago postmark and a return address of 14th Floor, Medinah Building, 178 West Jackson Blvd. It's addressed to Virgin Brand, the same recipient as the cover in Gault's collection and the one in McDermott's collection.

So now we have the

RAM perfin being used from two cities, and at least three different Chicago addresses. Three of the covers are addressed to Virgin Brand.

Stephen Tauber has come up with a theory about why the RAM pattern shows up with so many different corner cards.

Presuming the Rapid Addressing Machine Company was the original owner of the pattern, Tauber suggests that the firm provided a mass mailing service to client organizations and used its own machines to print the addresses from the mailing lists.

Any strong supporting evidence of such a hypothesis would have to come from extant company records, if such there be, or contemporaneous advertisements offering such mailing services.

Additional covers with yet other corner cards but with the same or similar stencil types would tend to support the hypothesis.

If Tauber's hypothesis is correct, it would signal a very early appearance of a mass mailing business on a "taxi" basis, but using stamps since it was before the introduction of mass mailing permits.

Does anyone have any data that might support this hypothesis?